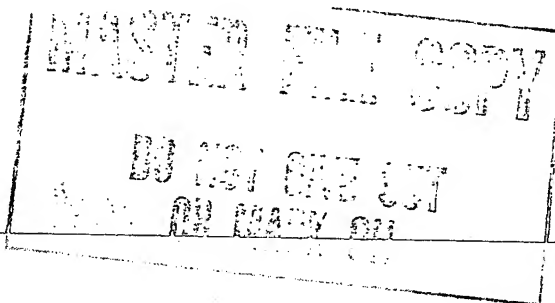




Director of
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INF: The Prospects for West European Deployment and the USSR's Reactions

Memorandum to Holders (II)

Special National Intelligence Estimate

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SNIE 11/20-3-82
16 November 1983

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**MEMORANDUM TO HOLDERS (II) OF
SNIE 11/20-3-82**

**INF: THE PROSPECTS FOR
WEST EUROPEAN DEPLOYMENT
AND THE USSR'S REACTIONS**

Information available as of 14 November 1983 was
used in the preparation of this Estimate.

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THIS ESTIMATE IS ISSUED BY THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE.

THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS, EXCEPT AS NOTED IN THE TEXT.

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of the Estimate:

The Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the intelligence organization of the Department of State.

Also Participating:

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army
The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy
The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force
The Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps

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FOREWORD

In August 1983 the Intelligence Community issued a Memorandum to Holders of SNIE 11/20-3-82, *INF: The Prospects for West European Deployment and the USSR's Reactions*. The Memorandum was prompted by growing concern within the Community over possible Soviet responses to NATO INF deployment. The judgments of that Memorandum remain valid, but, with deployment now imminent, we believe that the accelerating pace of events requires an updated consideration of likely Soviet strategy in the period remaining before deployment, and a closer look at probable Soviet reaction in the months thereafter.

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Memorandum to Holders (II) of SNIE 11/20-3-82

1. Deployment of new NATO intermediate-range missiles in Western Europe now appears all but certain to begin on schedule. We do not believe the Soviets will succeed in undermining Allied resolve on initial deployments. The West German Bundestag almost certainly will support Chancellor Kohl at the conclusion of its debate on 21 and 22 November.

2. For the Soviet Union, the start of intermediate-range nuclear force (INF) deployments will be a major political and military setback:

- It will signify that Soviet blandishments, threats, and support of Western anti-INF groups have failed to block the beginning of the NATO program.
- It will help thwart the longstanding Soviet effort to decouple US and West European defenses and will introduce a significant new military threat to Soviet territory.
- It has exposed some political differences between the USSR and its Warsaw Pact allies. They seem to have successfully urged some softening of Soviet political rhetoric in joint statements, primarily for the sake of continued economic relations with the West.

3. Although the initiation of US INF deployments will demonstrate that NATO remains capable of carrying out agreed defense measures, it will not be the end of the game for Moscow. This Soviet defeat will be mitigated to some extent by internal divisions in West European countries—particularly West Germany—and by differences between the United States and its allies that have accompanied the long struggle to get deployment under way. Although the UK and West German elections this year have resulted in gains for the pro-INF parties, Moscow will work at exacerbating tensions within NATO and hope that this will result in more conciliatory policies toward the USSR by at least some countries.

Soviet Strategy Between Now and December

4. The Soviets apparently have not yet completed their predeployment maneuvering. General Secretary Andropov's 27 October offer had little effect in Europe, primarily because the proposals presented only modest change in the Soviet position on missiles, and because the Soviets earlier had hinted at more sweeping SS-20 reductions. The Soviets probably knew that the offer would not have a substantial impact, but made it to give themselves some basis for continuing their propaganda claim of Soviet "flexibility."

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6. We believe that the immediate predeployment purpose of these overtures—or of any further last-minute offer—is to increase pressure for postponement of initial deployments or slippage of the schedule in 1984. Although Moscow's recent proposals still reject any US deployments, intelligence reporting indicates that the Soviet Union has become resigned to at least initial US deployments. Moscow also knows that Western deployments are scheduled to proceed for several years:

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It is likely, moreover, that Moscow believes political opposition will continue in Western Europe, giving the Soviets additional opportunity to strive to limit INF deployments. The Soviet tactic, therefore, is to make the political cost of

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deployment for the United States and NATO as high as possible and to strengthen the case for Soviet countermeasures in the face of alleged US intransigence. [redacted] "equal reductions" scheme, however, may foreshadow an eventual face-saving formula that would allow the Soviets to rationalize some US deployments and defer the issue of third-country systems.

Countermeasures

7. In the face of imminent deployment, the Soviets continue to threaten military countermeasures against Europe and the United States without clearly defining what the entire set of measures might be. The tone, however, has become less bombastic as deployment grows nearer:

- In *Izvestiya* on 23 September, Chief of the General Staff Marshal Ogarkov made clear that the USSR would respond to US INF deployments but stated that it would not "blindly imitate" US programs; rather, it would follow its "own path" in strengthening military capabilities.
- Soviet officials have specified that the USSR will deploy missiles that can reach US targets in 10 minutes, but have appeared to rule out Cuba as a base for counterdeployments.
- On 24 October the USSR's Ministry of Defense announced that preparations were under way to deploy "operational-tactical" missiles in East Germany and Czechoslovakia. In this context, we believe the Soviets were referring to SS-12/22s and possibly SS-23s.

8. We still believe that, in Europe, the Soviets will initiate, continue, or accelerate military programs, some of which they will portray as countermeasures. These probably will include:

- Replacement of FROGs and Scuds in the Warsaw Pact countries with SS-21s and SS-23s. (Ten Soviet divisions in East Germany have already converted to SS-21s in a program that began in 1980. We have long expected the deployment of SS-23s to replace Scuds, but so far none have been fielded.)
- Resumption of construction of bases in the western USSR for additional SS-20s, as Defense Minister Ustinov made clear on 11 November.

- Development and deployment of a modified SS-20 or a new IRBM. Such systems, if significantly different, would be easier to represent as countermeasures against the US P-IIs and GLCMs and in that way would enhance anticipated efforts by the Soviets to protect their current SS-20 force by focusing any subsequent negotiations on "new" systems.
- Deployment of long-range GLCMs in the western USSR, most likely the SSC-X-4, which has been under development since the early 1970s. It will probably not become operational in the military sense until 1985, although limited numbers could be fielded in 1984 for political reasons.
- Accelerated development or deployment of defensive systems against Pershing IIs and GLCMs. Andropov told a US labor leader in August that the USSR would concentrate on "defensive countermeasures," and [redacted] hinted at deployment over the next five years of defenses against P-IIs. These defensive measures may consist initially of radar installations in the front-line Warsaw Pact states (East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Bulgaria) and possibly in the USSR itself. [redacted] Eventually, defense improvements may revolve around the SA-X-12, which the Soviets could begin deploying as early as 1984.¹
- Hardening of a variety of military targets and possibly an increased stress on mobility.

9. The likely deployment into East Germany and Czechoslovakia of SS-12/22s will be a clear response to US deployments and the first time this class of missile has been deployed outside the USSR. The stationing of these missiles in these countries will lend credibility to the Soviet talk of a new "palisade of missiles." With a range of 925 kilometers, they will be in position to strike the United Kingdom and France from East Germany immediately upon the outbreak of conflict. As compared with the SS-20, SS-12/22s do not have multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs), are not as accurate, and will be more vulnerable because of their proximity to NATO. But the Soviets

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could view as a plus the capability to strike deep into Western Europe without firing from Soviet territory. Moreover, they could easily be withdrawn from Eastern Europe as part of any negotiated settlement with the United States without jeopardizing long-planned, ongoing deployment of shorter range systems.

10. The Soviets continue to refer to counterdeployments affecting US territory, although they have made numerous statements designed to indicate they have ruled out using Cuba. The US action on Grenada is likely to have increased somewhat the risk the Soviets would see in sending nuclear-capable systems to Cuba. Even before Grenada, the Soviets recognized the extreme sensitivity of any such deployments

11. Besides land-based missiles in Cuba, there are other Soviet options in the Caribbean area. We continue to believe that:

- There is a good chance—but still somewhat less than even—that the Soviets will send on periodic visits to Cuba Bear bombers configured to carry ALCMs or submarines equipped with sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs).⁴
- The most probable Soviet response involving US territory will be to deploy SLCM-equipped submarines off the US coast. Although this action would be characterized as a counter to NATO INF deployment, the development of this capability has long been under way.

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We therefore remain

concerned about the possibility, but we still believe it unlikely—a 10-percent chance—that the Soviets will deploy nuclear ballistic missiles to Cuba in response to INF deployment.² There is an alternative view that the likelihood of the deployment of SS-20s to Cuba is greater than the Estimate concludes.³

² For a full discussion of this Soviet option, see paragraphs 23-25 in the 9 August Memorandum to Holders.

³ The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, continues to believe that the likelihood SS-20s will be placed in Cuba is greater than 10 percent. According to this view, the Soviet leadership, while aware of the potentially great risks involved in deploying SS-20s to Cuba, is also cognizant of, and might be tempted by, the significant political (and to a lesser extent military) gains that would be achieved if the United States were forced to back down in a second Cuban missile crisis. Furthermore, the view holds that, given the significantly different US-Soviet military balance today as compared with 1962, Soviet leaders might anticipate that another Cuban missile crisis, in conjunction with renewed Soviet declarations about a desire to negotiate, would prompt West European leaders to pressure the United States to withdraw the Pershing II missiles and would split US opinion rather than generate a strong consensus in favor of US military action. The Army concludes, therefore, that there is still a 25-percent chance that SS-20s will be introduced into Cuba.

Postdeployment Tactics

13. Moscow's fundamental objective has been to prevent initial US deployments. Having failed, Moscow will turn its attention to limiting them.

14. Moscow is unlikely to change its basic tactic of attempting to influence European governments and public sentiment in order to get the Europeans to put pressure on the United States to alter its policy. Moscow will also continue to seek to exploit the missile issue to maximize strains within NATO in an effort to deprive future NATO programs of support. The Soviet Union is already preparing its postdeployment campaign by instructing West European Communists that the struggle against the new US systems must be continued after initial deployments. Moscow will continue to focus its attention on West Germany and

⁴ The Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, continues to believe that any deployment of ALCMs or SLCMs to Cuba is as unlikely as the introduction of SS-20s, because the Soviets would see these systems as equally provocative, readily detectable, and dependent on launch vehicles that are more vulnerable to US retaliatory action.

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could at some point suggest the possibility of improved intra-German relations or some Soviet gestures in exchange for West Germany's distancing itself from the United States. We still believe it unlikely that the Soviets will attempt to threaten the Kohl government over West Berlin or intra-German relations, given the longstanding importance Moscow attaches to strengthening its ties to West Germany and to Western Europe.

15. Moscow's negotiating strategy, however, is not so clear. The Soviets almost certainly will move shortly to suspend the INF talks, but we do not know whether Moscow has already decided how long the suspension should be or how and in what context eventually to resume negotiations over INF issues. Eventually, though, Moscow is likely to seek a formal ceiling on US deployments to limit a potentially open-ended program. But the timing of these efforts will be affected by several considerations. Prolonging the dispute over INF could provide the Soviets continuing opportunities to play upon divisions within NATO. Any agreement coming soon after the beginning of the US deployments would probably be widely perceived as a vindication of the US administration's tough tactics.

Moreover, Moscow will weigh carefully the impact of any moves on the US presidential elections. However, the Soviets probably will be interested in finding a mutually acceptable framework to deal with INF systems sooner rather than later because of their interest in limiting P-II deployments,

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16. Although the Soviets also have the option of walking out of the strategic arms reduction talks (START), we believe they would rather keep this channel in being to negotiate limits on intercontinental systems. But they may want a longer than usual winter recess. They would justify this by pointing out that they must revise their START position, which has always been contingent on no US INF deployments. Eventually, they may move to fold INF issues into START.

17. A final consideration is Andropov's health. A prolonged Andropov incapacitation—or even his death—would not affect the Soviet approach to arms control in a fundamental way. It could, however, make it harder for the Politburo to make tough decisions concerning an agreement with the United States.

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